

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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P 290900Z APR 76
FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5555
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 770

E.O.11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR, US, OREP (PRICE, MELVIN)
SUBJECT: CODEL PRICE VISIT PROVOKES POLICY COMMENT BY SOVIET OFFICIAL

1. IN CONNECTION WITH THE VISIT OF CODEL PRICE, SOVIET EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR FEDETOV COMMENTED TO USLO POLCOUNS APRIL 28 THAT: (1) CHINA WOULD NOT BE INTERESTED IN "WARNING EQUIPMENT" FROM THE U.S., BECAUSE CHINA KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL THE USSR HAS NO INTENTION OF ATTACKING IT; AND (2) WERE THE US TO PROVIDE THE CHINESE WHAT THEY REALLY WANT, E.G. MISSILE GUIDANCE EQUIPMENT, THIS ACTION WOULD DESTROY US-SOVIET DETENTE. THE TOPICS AND REMARKS CAME OUT OF THE BLUE, BUT FEDOTOV'S DELIVERY SUGGESTED THEY WERE ANYTHING BUT IMPROMPTU.

2. ABOVE EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE DURING THE THIRD AND MOST STRUCTURED OF THREE SOVIET EMBASSY ATTEMPTS IN TWO DAYS (APRIL 27 AND 28) TO FIND OUT FROM USLO THE "REAL" PURPOSE, CONTENT AND RESULTS OF THE CODEL PRICE VISIT. FEDOTOV, THE MOST SENIOR SOVIET OFFICIAL INVOLVED, WAS THE ONLY ONE TO INCLUDE COMMENT IN ADDITION TO PROBING.

3. REALIZING THAT NOTHING WE SAID WOULD ALLAY THE SOVIETS' SUSPICIONS, AND SEEING NO PROFIT IN INTENSIFYING THESE, WE HAVE GIVEN SOVIETS MATTER-OF-FACT DESCRIPTION OF "PRIVATE" FORMAT IN WHICH CODEL VISITS TO CHINA TAKE PLACE; REVIEW OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CODEL PRICE ITINERARY (INCLUDING ITS VISIT TO 196TH INFANTRY

DIVISION); AND CHARACTERIZATION OF CHINESE STATEMENTS IN FORMAL MEETINGS WITH THE CODEL AS CORRESPONDING CLOSELY TO PRC'S STANDARD PUBLIC LINE.

4. FEDOTOV WAS ARMED WITH WHAT VOA HAD BROADCAST ABOUT THE CODEL BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE VISIT; HE UNDER-STANDABLY DID NOT SEEM PERSUADED BY EXPLANATION OF VOA'S INDEPENDENCE AND OF ITS NEWS PROGRAMMING CRITERIA.

THAYER

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